

How can citizens become involved?

What do you suggest we, the public, do to ensure that chemical trespass isn't acceptable, reasonable or consistent with the preamble of our constitution?

How can the EPA support and partner with educated citizens to attempt to create the wisdom embodied in the 'precautionary principle'?

Dear Mr (b) (6) ,

Thank you for your patience – our resources are limited and there has been a tremendous amount of interest from the study participants – I'm sorry it has taken me so long to get back to you with answers. Clearly there's a broad interest in the answers to the questions we're getting about this study, so we're doing our best to consolidate all our responses, and we'll have them posted on the Oregon Health Authority website.

We recognize the importance of keeping your family safe. EPA uses a risk assessment approach that is defined by law and regulation. While the current laws we follow are not based on the precautionary principle, we do consider and adjust for uncertainty in the work that we do.

The laws and Acts created by the US Congress allow EPA to write and enforce regulations.

Here are some of the laws covering pesticides that form EPA's regulations:

<http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/regulating/laws.htm>

EPA has primary responsibility for registering pesticides and "product" compliance (production, sales, marketing, import/export) while states have primary authority over the "use" of pesticides.

Here is some information about EPA's responsibility for pesticides (including herbicides):

<http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/regulating/index.htm>

Here is additional information on public involvement in pesticide regulatory actions:

<http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/regulating/registration-public-involvement.html>

Here is information on EPA's environmental justice work:

<http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/plan-ej/index.html>

In case this doesn't answer your questions sufficiently you can also search EPA's "frequent questions" database:

<http://www.epa.gov/epahome/faq.htm>

Or you can ask a question of the EPA librarians:

<http://publicaccess.supportportal.com/ics/support/ticketnewwizard.asp?style=classic>

Oregon's Health Authority maintains a website for the Triangle Lake / Hwy 36 Pesticide Study:
<http://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyEnvironments/TrackingAssessment/EnvironmentalHealthAssessment/Pages/Highway36TriangleLakeExposureInvestigation.aspx>

Pesticides are regulated under several laws, primarily the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) which authorizes EPA to oversee the registration, distribution, sale, and use of pesticides. The Act applies to all types of pesticides, including insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, rodenticides, and antimicrobials.

Individuals applying pesticides must do so in a manner not only consistent with federal laws, but also consistent with state laws and regulations which differ from state to state. In general, states have primary authority for compliance monitoring and enforcing against use of pesticides in violation of the labeling requirements.

Pesticide registration is the process through which EPA examines the ingredients of a pesticide; the site or crop on which it is to be used; the amount, frequency and timing of its use; and storage and disposal practices. EPA evaluates the pesticide to ensure that it will not have unreasonable adverse effects on humans, the environment and non-target species. Pesticides must be registered or exempted by EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs before they may be sold or distributed in the U.S. Once registered, a pesticide may not legally be used unless the use is consistent with the approved directions for use on the pesticide's label or labeling.

~~So I ask you as a gate-keeper of regulation, what do you suggest we the public do to insure that being guinea pigs for these chemical trespassers isn't acceptable, reasonable or consistent with the preamble of our constitution, if that document is still relevant? How can we bring back responsibility and liability back into the equation. Or is the slow and continuing contamination of our ecosystems a foregone conclusion?~~

How can the EPA support and partner with educated citizens to attempt to create the wisdom embodied in the 'precautionary principle'? ~~Or is it just too late and we should all just drink our 'Jim Jones' cool-aid and lay down and die?~~

We appreciate your concern and try to be responsive to all the questions we get on this issue. We do get a lot of them, and we think that the questions we get, and the answers we give, are of interest to a broader audience than the handful of folks who have our email addresses. So we're planning to gather all the questions we get from the study participants, as well as other interested people, and provide them on a public venue (probably the Health Authority website).